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ABSTRACT

This paper examines trends that have contributed to the changing awareness and understanding of poverty and community in the United States. It also describes and comments on the recent amalgam of place-based and people-based approaches known as comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) and community building that have grown up as a result of the new conceptions of urban poverty. The recent devolution of federal government responsibility has called on states and localities to develop new capacity to replace former programs and to enhance community control. A number of individual approaches to reducing poverty in city neighborhoods has been used, but as these approaches fall from favor for various reasons, the community development movement has been emerging. A relatively recent approach to restoring poor communities is CCIs and community building. CCIs are neighborhood-based efforts that assume that neighborhood transformation depends on developing capacity at the neighborhood level to define and effect responses to local needs on a sustained basis. Several principles drive most CCIs. They are usually designed to be resident-driven, comprehensive, collaborative, asset oriented, and sustainable. The extent to which these goals and principles can adequately address urban problems is not yet known. It is apparent that current efforts to restore poor communities through CCIs are not large enough to address the problems of cities. A national agenda to rebuild inner cities must bring substantially more resources to bear. (Contains 155 endnotes.) (SLD)

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RESTORING COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE METROPOLIS:
Neighborhood revitalization at the millennium

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades in the United States there has evolved a renewed appreciation for the role of communities and neighborhoods in the reproduction of poverty and a growing consensus that community change is essential to its alleviation. The previous debate about whether place based strategies or people based strategies were the most effective approaches gave way to the recognition that the well being of individuals could not be divorced from the neighborhoods and communities in which they lived. A new wave of research that transcended the prevailing hostility among structural, cultural and individual explanations helped to foster this new understanding of urban poverty and neighborhood distress. It effectively linked important macro-structural changes in metropolitan areas to adverse social processes within low-income communities, which were further linked to individual behaviors that undermined success in the mainstream economy.

The 80s and 90s also witnessed a growing skepticism and ideological opposition to large-scale, Federal solutions to the problems of poverty and distressed neighborhoods. Devolution of many programs to the state and local levels was the result of both this belief and an effort to control Federal expenditures. The nation began to look to localities and even neighborhood residents themselves to tackle the growing problems of poverty and deterioration. An important model for local work was community development, a place-based approach to mainly physical restoration. Although the community development movement was expanding and achieving notable success, there was a growing recognition among practitioners and funders that regional economic forces and adverse social conditions within neighborhoods could undermine the success that had been achieved. Restoring poor neighborhoods would require

harnessing the energies of residents and outsiders in new ways to reverse negative social processes and metropolitan trends.

Finally, commentators and scholars examining American culture at the end of the century tapped into widespread feelings of disconnectedness and lack of meaning for which community began to be seen as the antidote. The nature of social relationships and participation within communities were seen as key to the effectiveness of democratic institutions and civil society and to the well being of individuals. Community was increasingly thought to be necessary everywhere even though it was seen as particularly diminished in poor neighborhoods. In fact, metropolitan-wide participation in the restoration of poor neighborhoods was felt to be a vehicle for strengthening community as a whole.

In this paper I examine the trends which have contributed to the changing awareness and understanding of urban poverty and community in the United States. Next, I describe the recent amalgam of place based and people based approaches known as comprehensive community initiatives and community building that have grown up as a result of the new conceptions of urban poverty. Finally, I will comment upon the promise of and challenges to these new initiatives with respect to the complex metropolitan forces that effect distressed neighborhoods.

COMMUNITIES AND POVERTY

A New Understanding Of Urban Poverty

In the mid-1980s William Julius Wilson published The Truly Disadvantaged which overcame a silence of several decades regarding the lives of the inner city poor.[1] Drawing on his studies in Chicago, Wilson argued that the neighborhoods in which many poor families lived had

changed rapidly and radically since the 1960s. He attributed the extreme impoverishment and disorder in these neighborhoods to the out-migration of the middle-class, the declining employment opportunities for the low-skill worker and the deterioration of community infrastructure and institutions. Life in these neighborhoods had begun to create serious disadvantage for the residents and the neighborhood influences presented formidable barriers to their escape from poverty. Wilson's analysis acknowledged that severe behavioral, attitudinal and skill deficits had developed in many residents due to the lack of effective role models, information and social networks that could enable them to succeed in the mainstream economy.

That a scholar of Wilson's prominence would acknowledge the growing amount and severity of disadvantage in U.S. cities was ground breaking. He had successfully posited an argument that began with macro social and economic forces but linked them to individual behavior through the mediating structure of community. Although there was considerable controversy about aspects of the argument,[2,3,4,5] it stimulated a new way of thinking about poverty. The acknowledgment of both structural and behavioral aspects of poverty served to bring together what had been seen as warring camps of liberal and conservative thinkers who either blamed the system or the individual. That communities were the pivotal link between the two served to focus renewed attention on neighborhoods within urban areas. Improving them began to be seen as urgent, not just for the future of the city, but for the life chances of the people within them.

The use of the term underclass, which had been reintroduced into the popular media,[6] galvanized attention toward the growing number of distressed people living in distressed communities, even though there were important debates about the meaning and validity of the

concept.[7,8,9] Whereas much of the scientific research on poverty had fallen into the province of economists for the previous several decades, Wilson's argument and the subsequent discussions awakened the interest of many disciplines ranging from urban geography to community and developmental psychology. There was a burgeoning of new research and a renewed interest in existing research on urban neighborhoods. The formation of the Social Science Research Council's Committee for Research on the Urban Underclass with support from the Rockefeller and Russell Sage Foundations connected researchers and policy analysts from many disciplines and fostered a comprehensive look at urban poverty and communities. The result was a fairly thorough analysis of the economic and demographic changes in metropolitan areas and the impact on neighborhood life within the inner city.

The Changing Metropolitan Context

Researchers began exploring economic changes within U.S. cities with the release of the detailed data from the 1980 diceneal census. They soon discovered that, even though poverty in the nation as a whole had not increased in the previous decade, it was increasing in many metropolitan areas, contributing to a growing sense of urban problems. These trends were found to continue or worsen between 1980 and 1990. Among the significant metropolitan dynamics in the last quarter of the century were: the growing concentration of poverty in the center city; the concentration of affluence at the outskirts of metropolitan areas; the changing mix of jobs and their relocation to the suburbs; the persistence of racial and ethnic segregation and its role in creating neighborhood disadvantage.

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Geographic Concentration of Poverty and Affluence

Several important studies traced the growing spatial concentration of poverty in large metropolitan areas between 1970 and 1980.[10,11] Aided by the advent of computerized mapping techniques, these studies demonstrated that a rising portion of the land area of some big cities had become extremely poor. In part, this happened because the middle class had left these areas, leaving them less populated but more homogeneously poor. Furthermore, a greater portion of the urban poor, especially African-American poor, had come to live in these distressed neighborhoods,[12] subjecting the residents to the difficult social conditions that concentrated there as well.[13] Not all parts of the country, though, showed this spatial concentration of the poor. It was worst in the industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest and in a few cities in the South.

The analysis of the 1990 census revealed that the spatial concentration of poverty had continued to increase in the largest central cities. Whereas 16.5% of those big city poor persons lived in extreme poverty neighborhoods with poverty rates above 40% in 1970, this had risen to 28% of the poor residents of the cities living in extreme poverty areas by 1990.[14] The concentration was even higher in industrial cities such as Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago and for African-American poor than members of other ethnic groups.

By 1990, many of the central cities affected by the poverty concentration trends were seeing vast areas of their landscape mired in the deterioration and distress associated with the loss of economic resources. Public and media awareness of these conditions had also been piqued. However, these trends were not universal. In the West and South, for example, the poor were more likely to live in non-metropolitan areas or in non-poor neighborhoods within the

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cities[15] and the number of neighborhoods that suffered extreme poverty were still remarkably few. Nevertheless, reversing the trend of growth in extreme poverty neighborhoods became a focus of action in many large cities.

Although it received less attention, a growing geographic separation between the poor and the affluent had also occurred.[16,17] By 1990, new areas of concentrated affluence had emerged at the outskirts of many metropolitan areas.[18] The distance between affluent enclaves and poor neighborhoods was most apparent in the large industrial cities that had extreme income inequality and a history of black-white segregation. By the mid-1990s the trend of outward migration of higher income households leaving fewer and poorer residents behind had also hit the older, first ring suburbs.[19]

Urban Sprawl

The escape of the affluent to the far distant suburbs raised concerns about the ability of the central city and inner ring suburbs to deal with the problems of poverty while important resources were moving beyond the city limits. The fortunes of the city dwellers and their institutions seemed to be divorced from the households moving further and further away creating a spatial and social divide.[20] The greatest financial impact of this selective out-migration was for older cities that had relatively small land area, hemmed in by suburban municipalities, whose revenue base was shrinking.[21] The consequences for the central city of urban sprawl also were different, depending upon whether the region was growing or not. It was in the low growth regions that movement outward meant a profound thinning of the center as well as the conversion of farmlands to low density residential and industrial use.[22]

The forces creating urban sprawl were a significant threat to many central cities and their surrounding older suburbs. In response to this threat, a few forward looking regions began to use regional partnerships to manage growth, both preventing farmland conversion and promoting denser land use in the urban cores.[23,24] There were some exceptions to the increasing poverty in city neighborhoods where middle class housing was built or restored (e.g. Simons and Sharkey 1997).[1] Nevertheless, in many cities the chances of attracting higher income households back to the center had been undermined by the social and physical deterioration created by their movement to the outskirts of the region.[25,26]

Employment

Employment levels in poor, inner city neighborhoods by 1980 were well below levels of previous decades. While this low level of labor force participation came to be understood as having a very negative influence on social conditions,[27] there was some debate about the reasons employment had fallen so low. An influential point of view grew out of a series of analyses that documented the loss of manufacturing jobs,[28] the movement of low-skill jobs to the suburbs and the increasing skill requirements of the service sector jobs remaining in the city.[29] An examination of the inner city residents' educational attainments suggested that many would be unqualified for the kinds of jobs that were opening near their neighborhoods. Further they lived at a growing distance from the suburban jobs for which they could qualify and this distance made it harder for them to learn about or travel to these jobs.[30, 31] Thus, there was said to be both a skill and spatial mismatch of inner city residents and jobs, created by the de-

[1] Simons, R. A., and D. S. Sharkey. "Jump-Starting Cleveland's New Urban Housing Markets: Do the Potential Fiscal Benefits Justify the Public Subsidy Costs?" *Housing Policy Debate* 8 (1997): 143-72.

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industrialization and suburbanization that characterized many metropolitan areas from the 60s onward.

The idea that there was a spatial mismatch hindering employment of inner city residents made sense but there was considerable debate about how important it was as a cause of their unemployment.[32,33,34] If employers had moved to the suburbs to avoid hiring minority workers,[35] for example, the barriers to their employment might have more to do with racial preferences and discrimination than distance. The fact that suburban firms with black hiring managers were more likely to hire African-American workers than inner city firms with white hiring managers supported this contention.[36] It was also recognized that employed workers might move to the suburbs because of their jobs making it seem, in cross-sectional studies, as if proximity had conferred an employment advantage to suburban residents. The debate among researchers, though, did not prevent policy analysts from concluding that connecting inner city residents to suburban jobs had to be part of any strategy for revitalizing neighborhoods and reducing poverty.[37] At the same time, it was recognized that the distance between city workers and suburban employers was more than spatial and that perceptions, preferences and social networks were all at work in producing disadvantage for inner city residents in regional labor markets.

The Search for Neighborhood Effects

A key component of the evolving understanding of urban poverty was the realization that living in an extremely poor neighborhood could actually undermine individual's life chances. In other words, troubled neighborhoods were not just a problem for the city but had negative effects on their residents. This seemed intuitively understandable to anyone who had ever tried

to move to a better neighborhood and captured the attention of both the neighborhood revitalization and family support movements. The logic suggested that neighborhoods should be improved not just for their own sake but as a way of producing better outcomes for families and children. Indeed, the thinking implied that problems of families and children could not be solved through individual services alone but depended on creating family supportive communities.

For researchers, though, neighborhood effects proved remarkably elusive to prove. An early and important review article tackled the question of whether the socio-economic status of neighborhoods could be shown to have statistically reliable effects on outcomes for youth such as educational attainment, employment, criminal behavior or teenage childbearing.[18] A limiting feature of this review was that most of the studies reviewed were conducted in the 1970s and early 80s before poverty concentration had reached its peak. Further, most of the studies represented the neighborhood context by a statistical measure of its socio-economic composition which was a very narrow conception of possible influences. Nevertheless, the conclusion of this widely cited review was that the effects of neighborhood context were weak, no where near as predictive of outcomes as family characteristics. Further, the effects that were documented sometimes showed different results depending on the gender, race or age of the individuals in the study.

An important problem in establishing the magnitude of neighborhood effects was the fact that neighborhood characteristics were highly correlated with family characteristics making these two effects difficult to disentangle. Traditional statistical models generally considered contextual effects to be what remained after family factors were controlled.[19] If disadvantaged families brought their personal limitations into troubled neighborhoods, this statistical partialling out of

individual characteristics would be valid. However, if prolonged residence in troubled neighborhoods had predisposed families to display certain characteristics, controlling for these would make neighborhood effects look smaller than they really were. The prevailing statistical techniques proved unable to sort these forces out in meaningful ways. However, an important natural experiment served to support the belief that neighborhood effects might be more important than the extant research suggested. As the result of public housing discrimination litigation, the court ordered a lottery process through which some public housing residents were selected to move to the suburbs and others were selected to move to relatively poor, inner city neighborhoods. A comparison between these two groups showed that the adults in the suburban locations were more likely to become employed than their city counterparts[40] The children in the families that moved to the suburbs did better in school than the children whose lottery status placed them in the city.[41] These studies did not reveal exactly what conditions in suburban neighborhoods conferred this advantage, be they community resources, social modeling, proximity to jobs, or other processes. However, the nearly random method of determining who moved and who did not served to disentangle the family characteristics from neighborhood characteristics and provided the most compelling evidence that poor, inner city neighborhoods limit their residents chances for success.

Subsequently, considerable work was done to try to pinpoint how and for whom neighborhood effects were significant, much of it captured in an important, two-volume compendium on the subject.[42] In a departure from a simple focus on socio-economic composition, the new wave of neighborhood effects research began to tackle the formidable task of identifying the social processes that might be responsible for the differences in outcomes

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between poor and more affluent neighborhoods.[43,44] For example, parents were found to adapt their parenting practices to stresses and dangers in their surrounding neighborhoods, sometimes with grave results.[45,46] Also, more impoverished neighborhoods differed from more affluent ones in that residents were afraid to intervene with neighborhood children and exert social controls in their neighborhoods.[47,48] Finally, resources and services for families and children were often more limited within poor neighborhoods.[49,50,51]

It now appears that social resources, social controls and social solidarity which are present to varying degrees even in poor neighborhoods may be the active ingredients of neighborhood effects[52] but such mediating processes are difficult to model statistically.[53] The research as it stands currently is not refined enough to tell which aspects of neighborhoods need to change and how much families and children would benefit from change in socio-economic structure or more supportive social processes. However, the search for these answers goes on and their remains an expectation that the neighborhood effects will emerge once the methodological challenges can be overcome.

The Importance of Social Capital

The recognition that social processes in poor communities were unsupportive of human development and success in mainstream society came amid a general concern in America about decline in community.[54] The term "social capital" seemed to capture the sense of what had been lost by the end of the twentieth century. Although the term had been used before,[55] it was the publication of Robert Putnam's (1993) widely read and discussed "Making democracy work" that gave name to the malaise. His analysis of civic, political and economic institutions in northern Italy served to connect the strength of community to the fabric of democratic society.

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Its loss was not merely detrimental to people but could threaten American democratic institutions.

Social capital was defined as " features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions."[56] It is capital that can be used to accomplish collective aims and is embedded in the social relations among persons and organizations. Social capital is thought to be fostered by social participation and civic engagement and in turn, enable the productivity and success of such efforts. The ability to associate is thought to depend upon the degree to which people and organizations within communities share norms and values and are able to subordinate individual interests to those of the larger groups. Out of such shared values comes trust, a key to accomplishment of both individual and group aims.[57]

Putnam,[58] in another provocative publication, "Bowling Alone" provided empirical evidence that social participation and civic involvement were on the decline in America. This resonated with people in many quarters and "Bowling Alone" was quoted in sermons, civic forums and living rooms across America. However, others countered that participation was taking new forms, which could not be seen, in the traditional types of participation examined by Putnam.[59]

Low-income communities were thought to have diminished social capital as a result of numerous factors such as a shortage of associations and organizations, the fear and distrust among residents resulting from crime and neighborhood instability, a lack of property or assets to protect and powerlessness in civic affairs.[60] However, volunteerism and participation in community organizations were not necessarily lower in inner city areas than elsewhere,[61]

although there was considerable variability among low-income communities in this regard.[62] Trust among residents and in institutions did seem to be lower in minority communities[63] and was thought to be particularly problematic in African-American communities due to their history of oppression in America.[64]

Sorting out the existence and magnitude of community social capital from its effects has been particularly problematic in low-income communities. Social capital is thought to evidence itself in the ability of the community to take action or in its collective efficacy.[65] However, the failure of low-income communities to achieve goals may have more to do with their lack of economic resources than their diminished social capital.[66] Access to communal and institutional resources may, indeed, foster the development of social capital.[67] While more empirical studies of social capital are needed to pinpoint its effects, it has become a key element of current thinking about neighborhood decline and revitalization.

The Devolution of Government Programs and the Failure of Systems Serving People in Large Cities

In the last quarter of the century, many of the systems serving residents of big cities were in crisis.[68] Of considerable relevance to the poor and to distressed neighborhoods were the declining academic performance of city children, the epidemic of violence, the rise in the amount and severity of child abuse and neglect and other signs that key institutions were failing. Big city school systems, child welfare programs, police and courts and public health departments were facing new problems and working in a changing metropolitan context but were unable to rapidly transform their complex systems. There were occasionally demonstrations of successful models of education or services in big cities but these seldom led

to wholesale improvements across the board.[69, 70] The public and many professionals became pessimistic about the ability of large government agencies to serve people effectively.

This lack of confidence in large public systems occurred in the context of a more general disaffection from big government in the United States and concern about government spending. Known as the "devolution revolution"[71] many Federal responsibilities were transferred to state and local authorities. While quite a few Federal programs were simply abolished, others were turned into block grants to state or local agencies. Spending on programs targeted toward the poor and toward disadvantaged communities was reduced.[72,73]

This devolution of government responsibility called upon states and localities to develop new capacity for financing, planning and management of major government programs. While it was possible that state and local government would simply cut spending further, it also presented an opportunity to adapt programs to fit local conditions and to give the public greater voice in decisions that were made. An example of both possibilities can be seen in one of the most massive social policy changes in the twentieth century, welfare reform (Personal Responsibility Act of 1996). Cash assistance to poor families was turned from an entitlement to a block grant to the states, which now would have wide latitude as to benefit levels and eligibility standards. States and localities, though, can use this flexibility as a chance to make major changes in their services, including bringing them much closer to the community.[74]

Despite the increased flexibility and community control that comes with block grants, they often represent deep cuts in government funding for the poor and for disadvantaged communities. Thus, while the powerful, interconnected forces creating neighborhood distress

and undermining the chances of their residents to better their situation had been recognized, the resources to ameliorate them were shrinking at the end of the twentieth century.

RESTORING OPPORTUNITY TO URBAN COMMUNITIES

The approaches to neighborhood revitalization that have emerged in the last two decades reflect an understanding of many of these forces affecting the metropolis as a whole and low income communities in particular. To varying degrees, current neighborhood initiatives operate within the context of deindustrialization and suburbanization. Acknowledging the interdependence of people and their communities, they have embraced the neighborhood as both a target of change and a vehicle for enhancing the lives of individuals and families. The latest neighborhood revitalization efforts have moved away from a narrow focus on housing or employment to an understanding of the simultaneous need for building human, economic and social capital. To achieve sustainability, they recognize that they have to build local infrastructure and know-how rather than relying on government programs or outside experts. Finally, the resources, both financial and human, needed to carryout these efforts are generated through entrepreneurial and collaborative methods from diverse private and public sources.

The idea that low-income individuals and families can be helped though a strengthening and enhancement of the places they live, is not without its critics. Historians have noted that neighborhood initiatives have sometimes been a way of just letting the poor fend for themselves and diverting attention from the structure of inequality in a capitalist society.[75,76] Further, place based approaches to reducing poverty are sometimes seen as inconsistent with the principle that geographic mobility is a road to opportunity[77,78] and necessary for efficient labor markets. Indeed, retaining economically successful residents in their neighborhoods is necessary to

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reduce the concentration of poverty that has developed in recent years. Retention of working families in central city neighborhoods, though, is contrary to recent trends in which they have followed the jobs to the suburbs and escaped some of the problems of the city.

While the characteristics of the current neighborhood initiatives are responsive to the changed understanding of urban poverty and metropolitan dynamics, they also draw from a tradition in the United States of neighborhood based approaches to addressing poverty and human need. A short history of these approaches will show the continuity as well as the departures from the past.

A Short History of Neighborhood Approaches

The history of efforts to improve low income neighborhoods in the United States is rich, complicated and reflects ebbs and flows in thinking about the causes of poverty and the role of citizens and government in addressing conditions in poor communities and the barriers to opportunity.[79,80] To varying degrees, neighborhood programs and action of the past contained elements of the approaches emerging today. However, over time, approaches to addressing poor neighborhoods can be seen as reflecting alternative understandings of the problem and what to do about it as well as the social and political movements of the day.

The settlement house movement

Early in the twentieth century, settlement houses were started by charities in neighborhoods with immigrant populations. This development reflected concerns about the societal changes brought by growing industrialization and urbanization. Progressive reformers led the movement to protect children and better the lives of the poor and the workers in America's growing industrial labor force.[81] Socializing the immigrants and others to the

American way of life and helping them to adapt to the demands of industrialization were important features of the settlement houses' work. Settlement house volunteers and workers focused their attention on both people and the places they lived with the relative emphasis varying from one settlement house to another. Community organizing was a widely used strategy to improve neighborhood conditions and as well as to socialize residents. The community organizing tradition of the settlement house movement has its counterpart in today's neighborhood initiatives.

Urban renewal and public housing

The conditions in poor sections of big cities became the object of concern after World War II. However, urban renewal was not about rebuilding these communities for low-income residents but sought to remove them from visible, central city locations and use the land for other purposes. During this period, large amounts of low cost housing were destroyed and residents, largely African-American, were forced to move. Public housing estates were constructed in less desirable areas but did not replace much of the housing that was lost. It is now recognized that communities were destroyed in the process of urban renewal and that the most significant toll was taken on African-Americans whose movement was severely constrained by blatant and pervasive discriminatory housing practices.[82] Federal and local governments supported urban renewal and the construction of public housing. Private developers also played a significant role which established alliances between private market interests and public policy to the disadvantage of the relatively powerless citizenry.[83] Today's efforts to involve residents in public-private partnerships for neighborhood revitalization are sometimes plagued with the suspiciousness born of this era.

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Conflict style organizing

The powerlessness of unorganized residents to fight urban renewal was an impetus to radical organizing.[84] Residents of poor neighborhoods were polarized from government and business. Organizers, often from outside the neighborhood, selected business or government targets and issues around which to mobilize the community. Drawing on the legacy of the labor movement, conflict was seen as the vehicle for bringing people together and allowing the community to challenge the power of big business and government. New approaches to community revitalization have largely abandoned conflict style organizing in order to emphasize partnerships among residents, businesses and government. Nevertheless, they encounter some of the same conflict and power differentials that significantly affect their success.

Community action and the War on Poverty

Although the War on Poverty of the 1960s had many new programs directed at human development, such as Head Start, community action was the primary approach to neighborhoods.[85] Its slogan, "maximum feasible participation", was based on the belief that the poor had been left out of decision making and that involving them would lead to effective action to reduce poverty. The fact that the community action program was designed in Washington and delivered to localities without the involvement of local and state government is one explanation for the political resistance to it.[86] In some places community action was weak because neighborhoods did not have the social and political infrastructure to quickly engage citizens in a successful planning and action process. Although short-lived, an important legacy of community action was the principle of citizen participation in decisions that affect them. Moreover, some of today's neighborhood leaders also got their start in community action programs. Nevertheless,

residents whose hopes were raised by the invitation to participate in community action and who saw few results were greatly disappointed. Current efforts to involve residents in neighborhood revitalization are often challenged to prove that they are about real change rather than participation for participation's sake. This suspicion can, to some degree, be attributed to the failed War on Poverty.

Service integration and neighborhood based services: As the War on Poverty waned in the 1970s, attention turned to more traditional social service approaches to helping low-income individuals and families. However, services were thought to be fragmented and plagued by lack of access and relevance to community. The movement toward neighborhood based and integrated services was also influenced by European models of personal social services, particularly the Patch system operated by local authorities in parts of Great Britain.[87] The placement of multiple services within one location or even one team of social workers was seen as a way to improve access and efficiency and make services an integral part of the community. The categorical nature of Federal and State agencies was seen as a barrier, though, to achieving such integration at the neighborhood level. Therefore, states and counties experimented with ways of reorganizing service delivery from the top down or collocating services in one-stop centers.[88] However, the complexities of integrating massive bureaucracies stymied many of the system reform efforts. Limitations on funding by the later 70s and early 80s resulted in many agencies that had moved out into the neighborhoods pulling back to their more basic and often statutorily regulated functions. While the integrated, neighborhood based approach to service delivery ultimately took hold in only a few places, the need for coordination and reform of

service systems and people-serving institutions remains an important theme in current neighborhood initiatives.[89]

Community development: As individual approaches to reducing poverty in neighborhoods were losing favor, the community development movement was emerging. In fact, many in the movement were hostile to social service and welfare programs which they saw as creating dependency.[90] Community development arose out of the realization that market conditions in poor neighborhood were unable to produce housing and business development. Community development corporations (CDCs) were created as mechanisms to replace and restore these markets. Their intervention in the market was largely in the form of putting together public incentives and subsidies with private developers to produce residential and retail development compatible with the needs of the community.

These place-based antipoverty strategies were governed by community boards.[91] They were heavily influenced by government and philanthropic funders and by the financial institutions on which they relied, even though they usually had some community residents on their board. Although some CDCs emerged out of the tradition of conflict style organizing, this became incompatible with the goals of financing and building housing. Most early CDCs did not so much work directly with community residents but influenced them through building management and tenant selection.[92]

By 1990 there were more than 2000 CDCs in the United States.[93] The most visible success of these organizations was in the production and restoration of low-income housing and building management.[94] CDCs and their funders, though, began to become concerned about whether they could maintain what they had built and make it economically viable because of the

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other forces affecting these communities.[95] It was clear that housing alone could not restore the social fabric of the community or change the opportunity structure for the people who lived there.[96] Some CDCs expanded their role considerably to include community organizing, social services[97] and business and workforce development.[98] This has largely been accomplished through partnerships that connect organizations within the community and the community to the metropolitan context. In some ways, these CDCs have become partial models or cornerstones for the latest innovation in restoring poor neighborhoods.

The next generation of neighborhood strategies: The history of approaches to low-income neighborhoods in the United States has been one of shifting emphasis back and forth from the needs of poor people to the desire to improve neighborhood conditions. It also has been one of targeted strategies such as housing, economic investment or service reforms versus more general efforts to organize and increase citizen participation. Historically, most of the approaches have been focused internally on neighborhoods themselves.

Today's evolving understanding of urban poverty has fostered a merging of concerns about people and places rather than the old dichotomy. It is understood that targeted programs for physical and economic development and human services will not be effective unless they are supported by cohesiveness and collective efficacy within the community.[99] In other words, social capital is necessary to the production and preservation of physical, economic and human capital.[100] There is also the recognition that neighborhoods have evolved and changed due to the economic and social dynamics of the entire metropolitan area and cannot be addressed in isolation from the region. Partnerships are thought to be needed both within the neighborhood, with people and institutions in the entire city and between the city and entire metropolitan area.

Comprehensive community initiatives and community building: A relatively recent approach to restoring poor communities is known as comprehensive community initiatives and community building. Comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) are "neighborhood-based efforts that seek to improve the lives of individuals and families, as well as the conditions of the neighborhoods in which they reside. They are defined as much by how the initiative works to promote individual and neighborhood well-being and by who makes the decisions and does the work, as by what actually gets done."[101] The framers of the initiatives generally believe that neighborhood transformation depends on developing capacity, at the neighborhood level, to define and effect responses to local needs on a sustained basis. Community building is, therefore, a defining component of CCIs. CCIs reject traditional approaches to neighborhoods and people which have been categorical and narrow or models imposed from outside. When models have come from the outside in, communities have not necessarily had the capacity or influence to make these traditional methods work and they have often been short-lived.[102]

Most CCIS are run by neighborhood based non-profit organizations and funded, in large part, by foundations. They may also receive government funding for certain categorical activities such as housing development, employment programs or services. Some receive private gifts from individuals, engage in profitable activities or put together deals with businesses and developers.[103] CCIs and community building are just beginning to emerge as a concept and a movement and, although there are many projects underway across the U.S., most are only in the beginning phases of implementation. Nevertheless, early experience suggests that commonalities and differences among specific initiatives may be seen in their goals, and in the principles that guide their work.

Goals of CCIs

The goals of most CCIs are inclusive of changes in people, neighborhoods and systems. Most CCIs want to improve economic opportunities for their residents and support human development so that the people will be better off. They also want to improve the conditions in their neighborhoods so that the neighborhood can be sustained, attract and retain prosperous residents and businesses that, in turn, are likely to make the people better off. Systems that serve people and affect neighborhoods are also the target of CCI goals because they have become ineffective in low income communities or present barriers to CCIs achieving their goals for resident and neighborhood change.

While these are the long-term outcomes that CCIs generally embrace, they may focus more or less on one or another of these. Some CCIs emphasize creating family and child supportive communities and effective services and supports for them. Others have an important objective of demonstrating more effective systems which can influence institutions on a larger scale.[104,105] Still others focus mainly on improving those aspects of the neighborhood and its opportunities that residents feel are strategically important.[106]

CCIs' initial goals may be affected by whether they have grown out of an existing community based organization, a foundation initiative, a government program or a community process. Quite a few CCIs have begun through expanding the role of a community development corporation,[107] a family resource center[108] or a settlement house. As such, their goals tend to relate to the original organization although they become more comprehensive and participatory. Some of the best-known CCIs, though, have resulted from national foundations' programs which are implemented in multiple locations.[109] Usually, some expectations regarding goals and

outcomes are built into foundations' grants to lead agencies and neighborhoods. When the government initiates community initiatives, they typically have even more explicit goals and outcomes that are predetermined even though the individual communities eventually shape them. Hope VI and the Empowerment Zones are examples of Federal programs that support community building along with comprehensive physical and economic development.[110]

The fact that CCIs are partnerships among foundations and/or government, neighborhood-based organizations and residents often results in some ambiguity about goals.[111] All parties typically agree that neighborhood residents must establish the goals relevant to their own communities. However, funders also have implicit ideas about the kinds of community changes that are needed. This situation can result in tension on both sides. Funders struggle with setting some expectations and holding grantees accountable while not imposing too much direction from outside. Simultaneously, residents and local organizations search for consensus on their own objectives while wondering whether certain things must be accomplished to sustain the interest and support of the funder.

Core Principles of CCIs

There are several principles that are generally espoused by the architects of CCIs.[112,113,114, 115] CCIs are said to be:

Resident driven: Residents guide the agenda and carry out much of the work of the initiative;

Comprehensive: They address all aspects of neighborhood life or conditions affecting the people there;

Collaborative: The initiatives work through and with existing organizations and leaders inside and outside the neighborhood and, increasing the synergy of their work;

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Asset oriented: The initiatives focus on strengths, drawing upon the talents and potential of the residents, their organizations and their leaders as well as incorporating assets or resources from the outside;

Sustainable: The community becomes able to achieve its goals and act in its own interest over the long term, adapting to the ever-changing metropolitan and global context.

While these principles are widely endorsed, CCIs differ in whether and how these principles are implemented. Also, there seems to be a range of ideas in the field about how and why these characteristics of CCIs are likely to create change. CCIs, which are a relatively new phenomenon, have not had much experience yet with some of the principles. Nevertheless, these realization of these principles are the major vehicles that CCIs are relying upon to revitalize communities.

Resident driven: Virtually all CCIs strive for high levels of resident participation and control and this principle has been very important in the formation stages of CCIs. CCIs seem to hold a range of expectations, though, about what is to come of this involvement. Some CCIs emphasize that such involvement will benefit the individuals and community because residents will gain skills, knowledge and a sense of being empowered as a result of engaging in community planning and action. In other CCIs, resident involvement is seen as a way of creating networks and relationships, which will raise the level of social support for residents and trust within the community. Still other CCIs expect residents who are involved to set clear standards for behavior in the community and hold each other more accountable for behaviors that affect everyone. Finally, the purpose of resident involvement in some CCIs is to guarantee that the actions taken by the initiative are compatible with and supported by residents and to ensure that

residents will help to make changes occur. In other words, the anticipated outcome of resident involvement in CCIs may be empowerment, networking, normative consensus or accountability.

These varying expectations for resident involvement produce somewhat different activities, structures and arrangements. For example, if wide spread networking and trust is the expected outcome, CCIs tend to emphasize involving large numbers of people in all parts and sectors of the community and connecting previously unconnected individuals. On the other hand, if the purpose is shaping actions that are more responsive to resident perceptions and have high resident support, a smaller group of opinion leaders and persons with direct knowledge of the community need to be involved. When empowerment is a key objective, resident involvement must allow opportunities to learn new leadership skills and to directly feel the results of ones own part in collective action. If residents are to enforce shared norms and expectations within the community, involvement needs to produce consensus and mechanisms for enforcement.[116]

In many CCIs, though, resident involvement may be an end in itself as well as a means to an end. Promoting social change through democratic, participatory means has ethical and practical purposes. Participation is seen as ethical in that it promotes a citizen's right to be heard and influence what happens in community. It is also practical because it is seen as the only way to sustain things and to have them work and be accepted (Chaskin and Garg 1997). Some people describe resident involvement as creating a changed way of thinking about their neighborhood—a growing sense of ownership. To quote one resident in a Detroit initiative:

> " The community is all of ours…the schools, the stores, the parks….if you don't treat them right, you hurt yourself. It's not so much about meetings and

process and planning…It's a way of thinking in terms of day-to-day neighborhood life."[117]

Comprehensiveness: Comprehensiveness had become a hallmark of CCIs, in part, as a reaction to piecemeal solutions that have not worked and to the recognition that poor neighborhoods are a beset by a number of interrelated challenges that are economic, social, physical and cultural.[118] Thus, most CCIs pay attention to economic opportunity, physical conditions, social and health services and safety concerns. Comprehensiveness has been approached in many ways.[119] Some initiatives have attempted to implement this principle by engaging in comprehensive visioning or planning, taking all aspects of neighborhood life into account. Others have started with a focal concern, such as youth, and gained comprehensiveness by examining all of the features of the community that affect this group of residents.[120]

Regardless of the starting point, comprehensiveness is based on the assumption that what is holding back low income people and their neighborhoods are a number of complicated, interrelated factors and that many of these must be overcome simultaneously in order for people and places to move forward. Removing barriers one at a time is not sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes because they are synergistic or mutually reinforcing. The expected result of comprehensiveness is that action will occur along many fronts and these actions will be more successful than they would otherwise be due to their synergy.

Working at cross-purposes to some degree with the notion of comprehensiveness, is the desire to achieve high levels of resident involvement. Comprehensiveness tends to require an elaborate planning process and a very far-reaching vision for a future community but this is

difficult to achieve and very time consuming. To mobilize residents, many CCIs feel that it is essential for the initiative to show early signs of success through action. Therefore, they must be ready to seize opportunities and produce visible results rather than tackling large and comprehensive strategies at the outset.[121] Further, residents may become impatient with a comprehensive planning process and may be interested in only their issue.[122] The diverging interests of residents that undermine comprehensiveness are most likely to occur in diverse neighborhoods where needs of groups are markedly different. For example, in a neighborhood with both extreme poverty and middle class home owners, there will be a divergence of opinion about the importance of working on a comprehensive agenda versus one that is more narrowly focused.

Even when the planning process has led to a comprehensive vision, CCIs struggle with how to take action in a comprehensive way. Sequential, parallel or truly integrated actions are all possibilities.[123] Although an agenda that tackles multiple concerns in one integrated process has been the ideal, practicality often dictates that issues are worked on one or two at a time. This may, in part, be due to the limited resources of CCIs relative to the myriad issues of concern in the communities. The problem of achieving adequate scale to implement the comprehensiveness principle continues to face CCIs.[124]

Collaboration: Collaboration is also a cornerstone of virtually all CCIs. Collaboration is seen as contributing to multifaceted solutions because the collaborators bring varying perspectives and resources to the table. It can also contribute to strengthening and deepening social networks through organizations, associations and individuals working together on

common agendas. An anticipated bi-product is growing trust and shared expectations among residents and the community's formal and informal organizations.

An additional outcome of collaboration is that organizations and individuals working together can amass significant amounts of resources and target them toward selected strategies. This is seen as assuring change of greater magnitude and visibility than that which could be achieved working alone. Early success by CCIs with collaboration is seen as producing know-how and skills among residents and community organizations to take on additional and larger collaborative efforts.

CCIs differ in how they implement collaboration. Many CCIs have begun with a defined entity called a collaborative, with key partners from inside and outside the neighborhood represented in the structure and governance of the initiative.[125] Other CCIs with resident governance structures have sought collaboration with organizations around specific action projects or issues.[126] The question of when and how to involve collaborators is related to perceived power differentials. While CCIs will eventually need partners from the government and business sector outside the neighborhood to achieve their aims, some choose to focus initially on strengthening partnerships internally.

Although collaboration is an important principle for CCIs, it can mean many things ranging from providing advice and comment on what another group or organization is planning to full integration of the human and financial resources of several organizations toward a common agenda. The predominant mode of collaboration in CCIs at present seems to be collaborative planning and joint ventures around new action projects.

The competition for scarce resources among existing organizations can often serve as barriers to collaboration within neighborhoods. It appears that clear and long-term commitments to these partnerships need to be made by private and public funders to overcome the survival needs of organizations which can prevent them from sharing resources and power.[127] The potential collaborators need to be able to see that their own mission is furthered, rather than undermined, by working together towards a comprehensive set of neighborhood concerns.

Assets oriented: Community building raises the capacity of the community to achieve its goals. Importantly, it does this be drawing upon the talents, information and resources, both realized and potential, within the community. Assets is the term community builders use and they mean this in stark contrast to the problem or deficit orientation of many service and neighborhood programs of the past.[128,129] These assets need to be identified and incorporated into the planning and action process of CCIs.

An asset is something of value owned or influenced by residents or institutions. Low-income communities may not have recognized and appreciated their assets in the past, but this is addressed through community building. An assets inventory is often a starting point for identifying human, financial and physical assets that might be harnessed in the process of achieving community change.[130] At times, something that was seen as a problem, such as vacant land, can be converted to an asset, such as a place for development of business or housing. It becomes an asset when folded into the community's vision for itself.

Institutional arrangements to build and support assets have often been missing in low-income communities.[131,132] Community building needs to go beyond inventories to creating the structures necessary to support asset development. For example, individual development

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accounts and other programs that enable the accumulation of capital in the neighborhood[133] have become an important part of some CCIs.

An assets orientation is not a turning away from problems and issues of concern to the community. However, it is intended to uncover the power and resources available to the community to address these issues and to diminish their dependence upon outside solutions and programs. It also serves to highlight the features of the community that can support development, attract investment and contribute to community identity and pride.

Sustainable: The disillusionment with quick fixes and government interventions has led to the recognition that communities must have the permanent capacity to plan and act on their own behalf. This is true for all communities, not just low income ones. However, years of disinvestment and lack of power and control have diminished this capacity in some neighborhoods. Community building seeks to restore the traditions, structures and skills that a community needs to maintain itself.

The concept of social capital is key to the notion of sustainability. Social capital is there to be used when needed and resides in the relationships and trust among people and their local associations and organizations. CCIs tend to believe that this capital will rise as residents and local organizations gain experience acting together and achieving success.[134] Social capital is renewed and expanded through this process.

Achieving this sustainability is a challenge, though, because many CCIs now depend on temporary foundation or government funding and the knowledge of how to succeed is just beginning to emerge. Although CCIs seek to create a permanent capacity within their communities, this requires sustenance from within and externally.[135] Thus, to be sustained, CCIs

have to connect themselves to the resources and traditions of the larger society, not just special purpose, temporary funding. They also need to contribute to the knowledge base of effective community change so that the capacity can spread throughout the society.

METROPOLITAN CONTEXT CHALLENGES COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

This paper began with a description of the metropolitan dynamics and changed understanding of poverty and poor communities that have produced today's concerns about low-income communities in the U. S. At the millennium, CCIs and community building have emerged as the prevailing response to these challenges. The question can now be raised as to degree to which the goals and principles of CCIs are adequate to stem the devastating effects of these forces: urban sprawl and concentrated poverty; the negative effects of poor neighborhoods on their residents; the loss of social capital; and the devolution of government and the failure of large systems serving people.

Addressing Urban Sprawl and Poverty Concentration

The movement of people and jobs to the suburbs along with the out-migration of the middle class from many central cities has isolated many of the poor in the most distressed neighborhoods of the region. These selective migration processes are powerful and have the potential to undermine the efforts of CCIs and community building in these neighborhoods unless they become linked to metropolitan solutions.[136] Distressed communities cannot simply work internally to the neighborhood or even to the central city. They have to connect to the entire metropolitan region which, in many places, is spreading rapidly into the countryside. The spread takes in more and more political jurisdictions, complicating these connections. CCIs need many partnerships beyond their neighborhoods to address these metropolitan issues.

One area which depends vitally on metropolitan connections is employment, both connecting neighborhood residents to job growth in the suburbs and linking urban business development with the region.[137] CCIs must address trust, information, access and skill gaps between their residents and the growth industries of their regions. Collaboration and partnerships within and outside the community are key to reducing these barriers to employment, but these partnerships have to stretch across many miles and overcome social as well as physical distance. Without addressing these challenging employment barriers on a metropolitan scale, CCIs are unlikely to stop the flow of employed families from their neighborhoods and the opportunities for their neighborhood residents will continue to worsen.

Some CCIs have begun to implement programs for connecting inner city workers to suburban jobs.[138] One model is for neighborhood organizations to recruit and assess the local labor force and to coach them through the process of finding and keeping work. They link residents to several job training or placement programs depending on their needs and skills. The programs are usually geared toward training or preparing workers for specific sectors with labor needs in the suburbs. Many cities with a manufacturing sector, for example, have advanced manufacturing programs to prepare the new kinds of workers that can make this sector more competitive. These activities reduce the cost for the companies of finding the workers they need and build on the informal networks and relationships that exist in the community. They provide that information link and bridge to suburban employment.

Many metropolitan areas have found that there is a labor shortage in the suburbs and that there are many people in the city needing jobs. This is fertile ground for the building of neighborhood and suburban coalitions to reduce the city-suburban barriers. Regional councils or

networks, made up of industry, government, training and placement providers, vocational educators and representatives of community development and community building initiatives, are often the initial step in making linking workers and employers throughout the region.

Housing markets are additional metropolitan factors that CCIs must influence to achieve their goals.[139] It is not surprising that low income families congregate in particular parts of the city because that is location for the majority of affordable housing in the region.[140] Although CCIs often work to create better or more low-income housing within their neighborhoods, this does little to reverse the growing concentration of poverty in these areas. Unless affordable housing can be created throughout the region and a middle income housing market can be reestablished in city neighborhoods, the process of concentration and isolation of poor neighborhoods is likely to continue.

Finally, CCIs need to join partners throughout the region to begin to control urban sprawl. Otherwise, the central city on which CCI neighborhoods depend will continue to loose its hold on the population and resources that it needs. The inner ring suburbs are often natural allies in this regard because they have begun to experience some in-migration of poorer families from the central city and are beginning to face many of the challenges of the central cities.[141] In several places, city and suburban churches also have become partners in the effort to curb the movement to the hinterlands and the resulting disassociation of the affluent from the poor.[142] Metropolitan-wide coalitions have been successful in changing public policy to facilitate controls on regional growth and are key ingredients of CCIs ability to overcome the concentration of poverty in their neighborhoods.[143,144]

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Harnessing Positive Neighborhood Effects

The neighborhood imbededness of CCIs suggests that they have much greater potential to reverse detrimental neighborhood effects on residents than programs that originate outside the neighborhood. The fact that they are comprehensive, tackling the many conditions that have been of concern also portends considerable ability to result in better outcomes for families and children. An important question, though, is how and to what degree must the neighborhood change in order to foster better outcomes for the families and children who live there. There is some evidence, for example, that there may be a threshold which must be reached on levels of employment or the number of middle class residents before poor residents are likely to experience benefits in terms of their own economic success.[145, 146] This would suggest that positive neighborhood effects are unlikely to emerge until the barriers to employment and housing are substantially reduced. Crime and violence are another example of neighborhood conditions that are thought to negatively affect residents, particularly children.[147] If CCIs produce a large reduction in these incidents, positive benefits for residents should follow but little is known about how long it takes to achieve a sufficient magnitude of change.

Earlier benefits from positive neighborhood effects may be achieved, though, if resident participation leads to better social control and collective efficacy or to more elaborated social networks and social support.[148] Although at this point there is no scientific evidence that participation alone can accomplish these things, it has seldom been tried in such targeted and intensive ways as CCIs are now doing. However, unless CCIs gear their residents' participation towards changing those aspects of neighborhood life that have become harmful to residents, such as poverty and instability, positive neighborhood effects may be a long way off.

Social Capital is Elusive and Pervasive

For many CCIs, the creation of social capital is an important feature of everything they do; it is the glue that ties the community together. CCIs see social capital as both a process and a product. It enables them to achieve community change but is also expected to result from their efforts to engage people and organizations in collaborative action. However, participation and collaboration alone do not have all of the ingredients to create social capital. In order to build social capital for a community, the participatory and collaborative efforts need to engender widespread trust, reciprocity and a common set of norms. Further, it would seem that for social capital to foster the kind of action envisioned by CCIs, the social networks of individuals and organizations must be sufficiently interconnected and dense both within the community and with external networks throughout the metropolitan region.

Participation in organizations and civic affairs are not synonymous with trust at the individual level,[149] although participation does seem to be a necessary precondition. Yet, fostering trust and a sense of obligation to one another in the community, especially among people who are having economic and other difficulties themselves, may require particular kinds of experiences in collective action. The action must be effective but also give something back to the participants, which makes them trust the process and willing to give back in turn. In diverse communities or between city and suburban communities, there is also the challenge of fostering trust among people who see themselves as different from one another and have a history of ethnic or class conflict. Interaction among people of good will who are involved with a CCI is a first step but needs to be accompanied by massive and widespread efforts to change hearts and minds throughout the metropolitan area.

Given the complexities, CCIs cannot assume that social capital will follow from their principles of resident involvement and collaboration but need to examine this carefully along the way. They need to be deliberate about the social capital building potential of the actions they take and the relationships they establish. In particular, they must foster the building of trustful and reciprocal relationships among residents, their institutions and among residents and institutions outside their neighborhood boundaries. Social capital that goes beyond the neighborhood would seem to be vital to the success of CCIs and necessary for their sustainability, especially after their initial funding support declines.

Devolution of Government and System Change

The lives of residents of CCI communities are affected by the large public systems that have often floundered in urban America, such as public schools, public welfare, children's services and the justice system. These systems alone vastly outspend CCIs and their collaborators within these neighborhoods and their functions cannot be replaced by collective action or the kind of innovative programs that result from CCIs work. Yet, for the community to achieve its aspirations, these systems have to become more effective with the people in these neighborhoods that they serve. However, communities are typically too small to have much of an influence on large systems on their own but need to engage in building coalitions of multiple communities and cross-community interest groups. Another model for influencing large systems is for CCIs to demonstrate effective systems change in school buildings or neighborhood offices and then work toward spreading the demonstration throughout the system. Perhaps the most promising role for CCIs in affecting system change, though, may be in readying the community to work with systems that have already committed to becoming more community based.[150]

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Devolution, may present opportunities for communities to have greater influence over policies and practices in these systems than they have had before. Federal programs and decisions have been devolved to the states and many states are allowing great latitude and decision making at the county or regional level. Within counties, many agencies are seeing that they need to move their planning and decision making further down into communities. CCIs need to build the capacity of the community to effectively shape these decisions in ways that will increase program effectiveness. Key to this success will be the ability to monitor program outcomes at the community level so programs can be modified and changed over time. Devolution, without capacity building at the community level, is unlikely to repair the systems and, in fact, could undermine them even further.

Going to Scale with Community Building

The need for comprehensive community change and community building has now been widely recognized. It is based on a number of convictions: that categorical initiatives shaped in Washington do not work; that market forces are not strong enough in these neighborhoods to be relied upon alone; that volunteerism is not enough; that organizing residents to confront systems does not go far enough; that the fate of the metropolis will be affected by the fortunes of these growing numbers of distressed areas; and that within the most distressed areas there are assets on which to build.[151]

The expansion of the CCI and community building movement is occurring through concept replication.[152] The basic principles and theories of these initiatives are being shaped and tailored to each community and metropolitan context. Indeed, the structures and activities put in place to operationalize the principles or concepts vary markedly from place to place. Concept

replication, as a way of increasing the scale of these efforts is in marked contrast to traditional replication of model programs in which an effort is made to copy, to the degree possible, the actual practices and methods developed in the model.[153]

The prevailing approach, starting these initiatives from the bottom-up but using common concepts to guide them, promises that the initiatives will be tailored to the uniqueness of each situation. However, any effort to institutionalize and expand such a movement encounters the question from policy makers and funders of whether and how such initiatives are working. In other words, they want to know what is their impact on the on the barriers and problems affecting urban communities. While this question can, in part, be answered for particular initiatives, the lack of common operational methods will make this difficult to answer for the movement as a whole using traditional evaluation methods. Innovative methods of providing meaningful evaluation of this diverse group of initiatives will be necessary if a compelling argument is to be made for their expansion and sustainability.[154]

Although many communities are moving forward on building their capacity to sustain change, the movement is vulnerable. Current efforts to restore poor communities through CCIs are not close to large enough to address the problems of the cities and their residents today.[155] A national agenda to rebuild inner city communities must bring substantially more resources to bear on the problems to overcome the metropolitan forces that have come to be well documented at the millennium.

Social workers can play an important role in building communities by drawing upon their historic roots in the settlement house and service integration movements but this role must be expanded and strengthened. Community social work practice, in the 21st Century though, needs

to be directed at the dynamic forces that devastated poor and inner city communities in the later half of the 20th Century. Community practitioners will need the skills and knowledge that can enable poor communities to overcome their social and economic isolation within the region while building their internal capacity to achieve their own goals.

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